

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 14 are pending, of which claims 1, 7 and 13 are the independent claims. Favorable reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1 to 4, 7, 8, 13 and 14 were rejected over U.S. Patent No. 6,052,736 (Ogle) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,687,247 (Wilford); and claims 5, 6 and 9 to 12 were rejected over Ogle and Wilford in view of "The Routing Table" (Anderson). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for at least the following reasons.

The independent claims recite that an element of a data packet is altered if the data packet is received from an external network, and is not altered if the data packet is received from the private network. For example, in one embodiment, a time-to-live counter is decremented in the data packet if the data packet is received from an external network. However, the time-to-live counter is not decremented if the data packet is received from the private network. As explained previously, this feature is advantageous because it enables a distributed routing system, such as the example shown in application Fig. 1, to more closely simulate operation of a single integrated device.

The applied art is not understood to disclose or to suggest the foregoing features of the independent claims. As previously explained, Ogle describes a system in which a data packet is routed to a first device, such as device 20, 24 or 26. If a routing table entry does not exist in the first device for the destination specified in the data packet, the data packet is routed to master device 22. Master device 22, which contains global routing tables, routes the data packet accordingly, and updates a routing table on the first device to specify

routes to the data packet's destination. Ogle thus describes updating routing tables. Ogle, however, does disclose or to suggest altering an element of the data packet if the data packet is received from one of the external networks, and not altering the element of the data packet if the data packet is received from the private network.

Wilford was said to make up for the foregoing deficiency of Ogle. In this regard, Wilford describes a linecard architecture that includes a control element 130 (Fig. 2 of Wilford), which provides packet routing. Fig. 7 of Wilford shows the functionality of control element 130 distributed over three ASICs (col. 11, lines 17 to 22 of Wilford). Among the elements of the ASICs is an LU CORE, which is depicted in Fig. 9 of Wilford. As described in the Office Action, the LU CORE either decrements a TTL field of a tagged packet or leaves the TTL field untouched as it goes through the router, which allows the "tag network to be invisible to traceroute if the network operator desires".

Wilford, however, does not in any way disclose or suggest altering, or not altering, the TTL field (or any other element of the data packet) based on whether the data packet is received from an external network or from a private network. Rather, as indicated in Wilford, incrementing or not incrementing the TTL field is performed based on the desire of a network operator. It has nothing whatsoever to do with whether the data packet was received from an external network or private network. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully disagree that the invention of the independent claims would have been obvious in view of the foregoing combination of Ogle and Wilford.

Anderson, which was cited for its alleged disclosure of updating routing tables, is not understood to add anything that would remedy the foregoing deficiencies of Ogle and

Wilford vis-à-vis the independent claims. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 7 and 13, and the claims that depend therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney can be reached at the address shown below. All telephone calls should be directed to the undersigned at 617-521-7896.

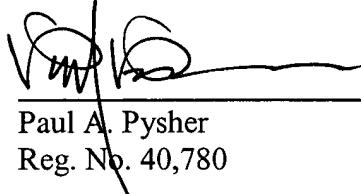
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Respectfully submitted,

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